

*Office of the Chief Information
Officer*
**U.S. Department of Homeland
Security**
Washington, DC 20528



**Homeland
Security**

March 11, 2013

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20428

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

The deployment of Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) Release 3 (R3) is a seminal event in the evolution of the Department's commitment to information sharing and collaboration between federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, private sector and international partners engaged in the homeland security mission. HSIN R3 represents a quantum leap in technology over the existing HSIN Legacy system that will provide trusted users access to a wide range of information sources, collaborative opportunities and analytical capabilities far beyond those provided by the current system and beyond what many realize is even technologically feasible. HSIN R3 is not merely an improvement of an existing system; it is a completely new concept on how information can and should be shared.

We believe that the successful migration of current users from HSIN Legacy to HSIN R3 is critically important to DHS' information sharing mission and to the HSIN Program's ultimate success. As the recently completed National Infrastructure Advisory Council (NIAC) information sharing study documented, frustration among HSIN users over difficulties in accessing the HSIN Legacy system has caused many to turn to alternative information sharing forums. The HSIN R3 platform is a complex, sophisticated environment that integrates high-level security validation of users with a robust and multi-faceted information sharing environment. As is common in the integration of disparate systems and the fielding of new software platforms, technological glitches will necessarily occur during the initial phases of the rollout. This is especially true when integrating sophisticated user validation procedures into a broader software platform.

The HSIN Advisory Committee (HSINAC) commends the HSIN Program Management Office (HSIN PMO) in assembling a highly competent, dedicated and well focused team that is working assiduously to effect a smooth transition from HSIN Legacy to HSIN R3 and managing the risk inherent in this migration.

Current difficulties being experienced in the user registration process, however, raise concerns that a significant portion of the current HSIN user base could abandon the program if registration issues are not resolved prior to migration.

In full cognizance of the Department's fiscal constraints, including from the Congressionally-mandated sequester, the HSINAC urges the Secretary to afford the HSIN PMO all necessary resources, including an extension of time if necessary, to effect a smooth transition of users from HSIN Legacy to HSIN R3 prior to the deactivation of the HSIN Legacy system. Should it become necessary to extend the existing HSIN Legacy contract temporarily while technological issues with the HSIN R3 registration process are resolved, we urge the Department to identify fiscal resources to allow the HSIN PMO to do so. We also recognize that adoption of HSIN R3 by the user community will take time due to the platform's sophistication. We therefore urge that the Secretary and the HSIN Executive Steering Committee (ESC) take a long-term view of the program's efficacy and not measure program success by the mere number of users enrolled during and immediately following the transition period. Instead, the committee recommends the HSIN PMO adopt appropriate qualitative as well as, quantitative measurements to evaluate HSIN R3 implementation.

The HSINAC met February 27-28, 2013 to provide advice and recommendations to the DHS Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) with respect to the HSIN program and the upgrade of the HSIN web portal software. The HSINAC respectfully submits the following recommendations at this crucial time for HSIN R3:

I. The HSINAC is aware of significant programming issues currently present in the registration process (i.e. nomination, validation and identity proofing procedures) for enrolling new users to the HSIN R3 platform.

Recommendation 1. All available resources should be utilized to minimize any programming issues that would result in users' inability to gain access to HSIN R3. In this crucial time for the implementation, it is imperative that users not experience difficulty with the migration process.

II. The HSINAC identified the importance of the HSIN outreach messaging pertaining to the migration from HSIN Legacy to HSIN R3.

Recommendation 2. Communications on the migration to the HSIN R3 platform must be significantly improved to the HSIN user community. Specifically, communications and messaging must explain:

- A. Why the migration is necessary from HSIN Legacy (old technology);
- B. What the migration process entails (its timing and requirements, as well as the realities of the registration process);
- C. Why HSIN R3 represents a major advancement from the HSIN Legacy platform. The value proposition for HSIN R3 must be communicated succinctly and in detail,

however, efforts must be made to explain that not all of HSIN R3's capabilities will be available immediately after migration. Expectations must be managed.

D. Communications must become more frequent, detailed and targeted.

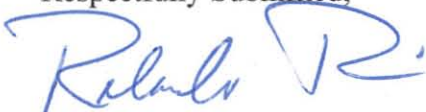
III. The HSIN program should focus migration communications and actual migrations on "high value" communities of interest that best demonstrate HSIN's value proposition and stories of success, while also managing expectations surrounding the migration.

Recommendation 3. Targeted migrations must be used to ease the flow of migration, allowing time to correct technical challenges facing the migration process, most pointedly including the registration process and its nomination, validation and identity proofing procedures. Users must be able to register for HSIN R3 as seamlessly and quickly as possible, to avoid a backlash against HSIN R3 before it can begin to prove its value proposition.

Finally, targeted migrations should leverage the support of HSINAC members themselves, allowing the program to make the strongest case possible for the HSIN R3 value proposition, and the need to go through migration, while also demonstrating HSIN success stories and best practices.

We very much appreciate the emphasis you have placed on obtaining input into HSIN development from Federal, state and local partners, and hope these recommendations help further the Department's progress toward that goal.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rolando Rivero
Chair, HSIN Advisory Committee